LOST IN THE ARCTIC

ADVENTURES OF TWO BOYS

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

REV. JÓN SVENSSON, S.J.

By Rev. MATT. BODKIN, S.J.

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"I lived there with my father and mother when the things I am going to tell you about now happened to me."

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* [*The "Nonni" of this tale, Fr. Jon Svensson, a distinguished author, whose works have been translated into many languages, is a member of the Society of Jesus. He vouches absolutely for the truth of this story, adding that the events herein narrated took place in the year* 1868.]

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THE MAGIC FLUTE

The little village of Akureyri is a delightful place. Right on the northernmost point of Iceland it stands, and is mirrored in the waters of the magnificent Eyjafyordur fiord. I lived there with my father and mother, when the things I am going to tell you about now happened to me.

It began this way: One day not long after my eleventh birthday a visitor came to stop with us. He was a relation of ours, though not a very close one, and his name was Mr. Angrim. It seems strange now to think that this perfectly ordinary visit was to have consequences that affected my whole future life.

After dinner Mr. Angrim offered to give us a little music. It appeared that he was devoted to music, played on the flute with quite exceptional talent, and carried his instrument about with him on all his travels. His offer was enthusiastically accepted, and I was specially delighted because I had never before so much as seen a flute.

So Mr. Angrim went to his bag, and, with an almost reverent care, drew forth a leather case. This he placed tenderly upon his knees and opened it. A superb ebony flute with shining silver mountings was disclosed to our view. Very carefully he fitted the pieces together, then he lifted the wonderful flute to his lips and began to play.

I was simply enchanted. The delicate cadences stole into my heart and quite carried me away. Never before had I heard such music.

Mr. Angrim played with an artist's skill and an artist's joy. Moreover, before he played a piece for us he explained to us what the music meant. His programme was varied—French, German and Danish airs one after another, and many of them were so beautiful that I have never forgotten them; after all these years they still haunt my memory. As one melody followed another, my delight in this music, so gay, so grave, so liquid, so mellow, became more and more ardent.

That evening, when everyone had gone to bed, I slipped into our guest's room, and begged him to teach me how to play the wonderful instrument. Mr. Angrim was frankly astonished at my youthful enthusiasm. " This is more than I bargained for," he exclaimed laughing. Then, taking both my hands in his, he went on more seriously, " It's impossible, I'm afraid, my little friend, impossible. Unfortunately I'm only stopping just this one night; so you see there'd scarcely be time to teach you."

" Oh, I'd take *such* pains ! Do, please, do teach me ? Ever so little even ! Teach me the very beginnings, now, this very evening."

" This evening ? With everyone in bed long ago ! Oh, but we simply daren't do that, young man."

" Yes we dare, we could do it quiet easily. And we'd play softly, ever so softly."

Taken aback at my eagerness, Mr. Angrim gave way at length. He would teach me just the elements of the fingering. I stayed with him far into the night, practising assiduously. At length I decided I had had enough for a beginning. I could easily get on by myself after this. I began to chat with my professor.

" I do believe there's no music to compare with that of the flute."

" You're quite right, young man. There's something haunting; yes, bewitching about it. Even the brute beasts are tamed by it. With the flute one can charm snakes and rats and the fish in the sea. You know the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin; how he made all the rats in the town follow him by his playing ?"

Utterly astonished I could only gasp : " Rats, that's wonderful enough, but do you really mean you could get the fish in the sea to

follow you just by playing the flute?"

"Exactly!" he replied.

"Tell me, please, quick; how's it done?"

"First of all, you must steer for a lonely stretch of water; and when you're there you must keep very quiet; then you begin to play. Shrill, long-drawn cadences are far the best. If you keep it up long enough, the fish will float up to the surface. They will come swimming quietly from every direction, they'll listen and listen and listen, and after that they'll follow your boat wherever it goes."

"Oh, it's too good to be true," I cried. "And would they follow *me* that way?"

"Of course, they would—that is, if you managed to play just the right airs."

By this time it was very late, so I had to hurry off to bed. All night long, however, I dreamt of nothing but fishing—with a magic flute. In Iceland there are no rats, no serpents, but there are fish in plenty. The sea, the fiords, the lakes, the rivers are all teeming with them. I was possessed by a firm determination. I would get a flute and make the fish follow me. Mr. Angrim was scarcely gone next morning, therefore, when I betook myself to my father's study. He was sitting at his desk. I blurted out my request at once.

"Oh, father, I simply love playing the flute. Please do give me some money to buy one like Mr. Angrim's."

My father put down his pen and swung round towards me in his office chair. He was plainly surprised.

"What, you want to buy a flute, eh? But you know flutes are very dear things. I think, you know, you'd better wait a little. Later on we'll think about it."

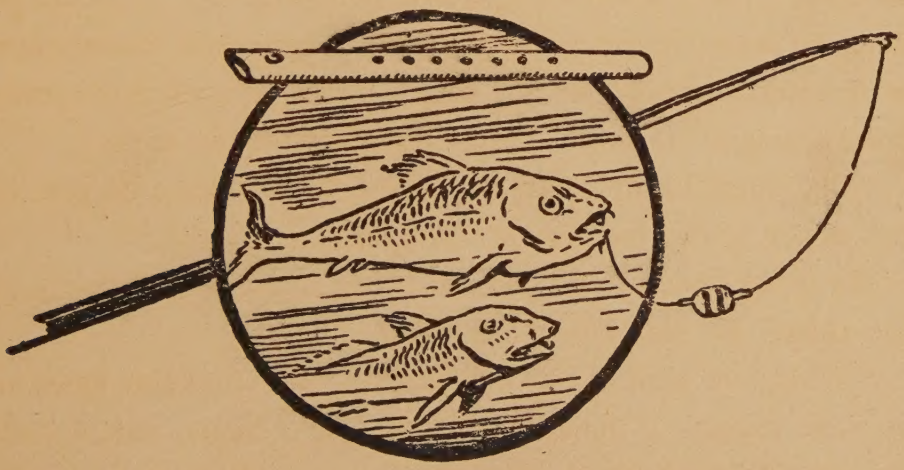
" I'd buy a really cheap little flute. Please, father; I'm really keen on learning to play."

My father laughed at this.

" Since you're so very keen," he said," I suppose you must have one. Run off with you so, and buy ' a cheap little flute ' for yourself. You can tell them to put it down to my account."

I thanked him warmly and dashed off to the town to make my purchase. In a quarter of an hour I was the proud possessor of the daintiest magic flute you ever saw. Next, I practised day and night till very soon I could play by ear all the tunes I knew on my little flute. Shrill airs and long-drawn finals had very special attention paid to them.

Had I known the terrible suffering my magic flute was going to cause both my little brother and me in the next few days, I should have thrown it promptly into the fire. But no presentiment troubled me. I was happy as the day was long, while overhead the danger clouds gathered black and menacing.



" We stopped for a long time admiring the sinister beauty of the superb ship."

THE HARBOUR

There was still one thing between me and my desire. I had to get permission to go for a sail far out into the fiord. Not relishing an excursion all by myself I sought out my younger brother, Armann.

" Listen, Manni," said I to him (Manni was his nickname or rather pet name, just as Nonni was mine), " would you like to come for a sail in the yawl to-morrow round the outer fiord ?"

" Oh, to be sure I would. But what do you want out there ?"

" A wonderful plan, Manni. I'm going to play on the flute for the fishes."

" For the fishes !—but do you really think they'll like it ?"

" Of course, they will. But that's not the whole plan. Oh, you'll see, the fish are going to follow us about. But, mind you, don't say a word, because if you do we'll never get mother's leave."

When Manni had promised, I went off to get the desired permission from mother. She gave it to me, with the usual restrictions, of course ; I was only to put out in fine weather and on no account to go far from the shore. That didn't suit me at all, because to push out for the open was exactly what I proposed doing. I thanked my mother all the same, but I took good care she should not guess what I meant to do. That was very wrong of me ; it wasn't long before I paid for it.

The weather next day was simply perfect, a blue sky, a hot sun, not a breath of wind, and the air was full of the scent of countless wild flowers. We could not have asked for a more glorious day, and Manni and I were as happy as kings. We made all our preparations very early and soon our little red and green boat was launched. I brought my fishing gear with me : a long line and on the end of it a lead fish. Out of this fellow's mouth there came two hooks, on one of them I put a little worm and on the other a twist of red rag. Fish bite very well with that.

I was getting my little brother settled into the boat when an old woman came along. She was a widow, her name was Thordis, but everybody always called the old dame " Vala," which is an old pagan word of ours and means a sort of witch, a wise woman, who knows the future.

But there really was nothing of the pagan witch about Thordis. She was a good, pious old woman.

" Where are you off to, children ?" she asked.

" To fish in the fiord."

Thordis saw the top of my flute sticking out of my pocket. " And you're going to play the flute, too ?" she asked.

A little put out, I answered her : " Yes—between times."

She gave me one of her looks that seemed to go right through you.

" I'm not happy about you, you make me miserable, both of you ; though I can't make out why," she said slowly. " God guard and protect you."

This talk of hers frightened me a little. There was a pause, then she said suddenly :

" Now, Nonni, do give up this trip."

" But why ? "

" Because you might easily come to some harm," she said, looking all the time at my little brother. " It's not safe, really it's not, for two little boys to go sailing all by themselves right out into the fiord."

I stopped irresolute. I was in fact on the very point of dropping my plan, when Manni cried out,

" Now then, Nonni, are you going to push off ?"

" All right," I answered without stopping to think, " off we go, Manni."

Then I tried to throw my anxiety to the winds, and addressing Thordis I said, " We simply couldn't bear to give up this excursion. We've set our hearts on it, and we've got leave to go, and all."

" Then, in God's name go," replied the kindly old dame, " but promise not to go out beyond Oddeyri head, stay in the roadstead

where there's some shipping; you've plenty of room there to knock about in."

"Indeed, we'll be very careful," I answered.

To promise her not to go outside the harbour was impossible. Our whole project would fall through if I did, because the plan was to push out until we got to a really lonely spot. I hastened, therefore, to say good-bye to Thordis and to get away from this disquieting conversation. I made Manni sit down in the stern, and pushing off from the bank, I jumped into the boat. I had to shove a little bit at first with an oar, but soon the boat was off the sand and floating in deep water. The sea was still and clear as a big jewel.

"Isn't it lovely, isn't it lovely!" cried Manni, clapping his hands in delight.

The dear little fellow was too small to row, so I said to him, "Listen here, Manni, you're not a bad little chap, what do you say to being skipper to-day?"

He liked that and went to the tiller at once. I settled myself down on my seat and took both oars. Soon we were slipping quickly through the water. It whispered and gurgled under our bow. The sun made a wandering gold and silver loveliness over the whole bay. The foreign ships that were anchored well out in the wide bay floated double, ship and shadow, so still and clear were the water and the sky.

"Nonni," began my small steersman, "Mayn't we go over close to the ships, and get a good view of them?"

"All right," I said. "We've got plenty of time. Put over her helm, so."

There were nearly twenty ships in the harbour, most of them Danish merchant-men from Copenhagen, with one Norwegian whaler,

and a superb English yacht. Her owner, a rich lord, was off on some expedition or other to the interior of the island. But far out to the North lay the biggest and most beautiful of them all. She was the Pandora, a French man-o'-war. She had put in some days earlier, and was on the point of departing for the return journey to France. Between her and the land and the other ships therefore there was a constant going and coming of small boats. So there was plenty to interest two youngsters like ourselves.

Manni kept our little boat head-on for the Danish ships, which were anchored nearest us. We doubled the little Danish schooner Rachel to begin with ; she was a dainty little vessel with her bulwarks painted red and only one slender mast. We went right round her to have a word with her ship's boy, who was an old acquaintance of ours. He called out a friendly greeting to us, and wished us a pleasant sail. Then as we ran under the counter of a fine ship, the Hertha, the Danish sailors leaned over the side to exchange the time of day with us.

" Where are you bound for ? "

" Pleasure trip."

" Like to come aboard ? "

" Many thanks, but we mus'n't."

" Who says not ? "

" Mother ! "

" Why not ? "

" Don't know. Perhaps she was afraid of something happening us."

" But why should she be afraid ? "

" There was once a little boy who went aboard a strange ship,

and it went off with him, and he was never heard of any more."

" Dirty kidnappers—but hold on a bit anyway : I'll be back in a moment," and the seaman disappeared from view.

I stood off a few yards by way of precaution. You never can tell what mischief he might be up to, I thought to myself. He came on deck again a moment later, however, and leaning over the side, tossed us down two great, golden oranges.

" Good for the thirst," he called out.

Manni and I thanked him heartily.

Then we made for the English pleasure-yacht. Her brasses and polished wood-work glittered and twinkled in the sun like star-points. We rowed very slowly in order to get a good look at her and we went right round her. When we were quite close to her some English sailors appeared. They had red caps on, and we thought they looked extremely funny in them. They made all sorts of signs to us, and called out to us, but we could only make out the two words, " Good boys."

We saluted them in turn and shouted, " All right." These were the only two English words we knew.

The crew laughed at that, and shouted back again, " Good boys!" Nothing daunted we repeated our " All right " and continued on our tour of inspection. We proceeded to visit every one of the boats in turn, and examined them all, meeting thus with quite a number of little adventures. We kept the best till last. We drew near at last to the French ship, the Pandora. She was a powerful armoured cruiser. We stopped for a long time admiring the sinister beauty of this superb ship. Her sailors greeted us cheerfully. There were boys on board her too, sunburnt, keen, lively youths, with very black

hair. They were the cadets, we were told, who would later on be commissioned officers in the French navy. We looked at one another curiously, and they called out to us in French in answer to our hail. Alas, we naturally did not understand one word of what they were saying.

" Oughtn't we to answer them ? " inquired my small brother.

" We ought all right," I said, " but how can we when we don't know any French ? "

But Manni was not easily baulked.

" You might at least shout 'Napoleon ! ' " he suggested gaily, " Perhaps they would understand that."

" Do you really mean me to, Manni ? " I asked doubtfully.

" Of course ! Go on, shout, and we'll see what they say ! "

I began to shout at the top of my voice " Napoleon ! " and sure enough everyone on board seemed delighted. More and more sailors and cadets kept gathering at the side, several of them were perched on the rail ; and nearly everyone was laughing at the two little Icelanders. Manni, fresh and rosy, literally brimming over with health, and his brother, a little taller, a little paler, but both with the straw golden hair of the Vikings, were not the kind of youngsters these dark, sun-tanned sailors were used to.

" Let's be off, Manni," I said. " I don't like the way they all stare at us."

" Yes, don't they ? " he answered laughing.

We waved them a good-bye, and were just making off, passing near the foot of the companion-way, which was lowered, when suddenly one of her steam-launches from the shore came alongside. We made all haste to back out of her way, and leave the stairs free. But we had

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scarcely started again, when at an order from the bridge one of the sailors in the launch reached out with a grappling iron, caught the bow of our boat, and drew her towards the launch. Manni and I tried our best to loosen the hook. To the great amusement of the watchers above a short struggle took place. But our resistance was quickly overcome. Strong hands seized us and transplanted us on to the little platform at the foot of the companion-way. We had to stop there. What it was all about we had not the slightest idea, but I said to Manni : " Now we're prisoners of the French !"

" It's queer," he answered. " What do they want taking us this way for, and they all seemed so kind and friendly too."

" Oh, it's only a joke, I bet. I'm sure you needn't be one bit afraid."

At that very moment an officer came quickly down the steps. He smiled and gave us each a hand, and made us come up with him. It was easy to see no one wanted to hurt us, so we went with him without any hesitation. On the bridge a most gracious reception awaited us, everyone was smiling, and we had to shake hands all round. The officer brought us right across the big deck and we saw the heavy guns mounted on it, and the stern-faced sentries, marching back and forward, with drawn cutlasses shining in their hands.

We went down a flight of steps and paused in front of a door. It was made of beautiful polished mahogany and inside it there was a charming little room. Everything in it was extraordinarily fine and rich. The officer made us sit down at the table that stood in the middle of the cabin, and, taking down a big picture book from a shelf on the wall he put it between us, turned over a few pages for us

to show us we might look through it, and then went out, leaving us alone.

" Manni, this is wonderful !" I exclaimed the moment he was gone. " It's like a story out of the Arabian Nights."

" Yes, isn't it ?" he answered. " Only they're even nicer to us than they are to princes there."

" But what are they going to do with us, Manni, d'you think ?"

" How should I know ? Carry us off to France, perhaps, like the Turks used to carry people off to Algiers long ago."

I laughed at this silly idea of Manni. " I should hope not," I said. " Don't you know that the Turks used to keep the poor wretches they carried off as slaves. You don't think nice people like the French are would do a thing like that ?"

" No—I wouldn't like to go as a slave to France, but I should love to see that beautiful country all the same."

" That would be lovely," I agreed. We began to turn over the pages of the book and to look at the pictures, and very soon the door opened and a man came in. He was dressed from top to toe in shining, spotless white—the ship's cook. He nodded amiably to us and he put down on the table two plates piled with cakes and sweets. Next he filled two little glasses with a light white wine. Then he made a gesture to us to help ourselves.

" How decent these French people are to us," said Manni to me.

" Rather !" I answered promptly.

We set to without delay and found the little cakes perfect. The white wine, too, gave our banquet a deliciously grown-up air. We had finished our luncheon before the officer came back, and we got

up at once when he came in, and went over to shake hands with him and say, " Thanks very much for the refreshment," which is good manners in our country. He understood us all right, shook hands and then led us forward to a brilliantly lit-up cabin. There we found a photographer with all his apparatus. We tidied ourselves up a bit and he settled us. I sat down and Manni stood over me with his hands on my shoulders. There was a little click, and there was the photographer smiling and nodding his thanks to us. We were photographed. Now, cameras in those days seemed a more wonderful magic than even an enchanted flute.

When we got back to the deck we were surrounded on all sides by the young cadets. They were full of life and made all sorts of efforts to try and talk to us, and to understand what we were saying. It wasn't much good, however, for it's not exactly easy to carry on a conversation in one word, and that word " Napoleon." They came with us down the steps to our boat alongside and filled our pockets with cakes and fruit and raisins. We pushed off to a chorus of hearty " adieux."

" . . . . We had thoughtlessly forgotten all about mother's instructions, and the warnings old Thordis had treated us to."

FISHERMEN

As we pulled away from the Pandora her crew gave us a hearty cheer and waved their caps in the air. For our part, knowing we were observed of all observers, we did our very best to row as stylishly as we possibly could. Eight-years-old at the helm comforted himself with the bearing of a veteran sea-dog, and I plied my oars with all the skill I was capable of, but when we had got a fair distance from the warships, I simply pulled with might and main till the spray was dashing up at the prow, and we were slipping through the water at a splendid pace. Tired out at last, I shipped oars and let the boat drift on ; it was delightful to float gently forward with no effort at all.

" Well, how are you enjoying our day out ? " I enquired of my small brother.

" Ever so much. And it was jolly with those French sailors, wasn't it ? "

" Rather ! Besides, we know now what they took us prisoners for—to capture our photographs. So we'll go to France, or at least our pictures will, after all."

" And I say, Nonni, weren't their cakes good ? "

" You mus'n't be a greedy pig, Manni," said I priggishly, remembering my seniority. " It's time we caught some fish for a change."

" Well, let's get to a decent spot before we start fishing anyway," he answered, a little crossly.

" This is all right," I said. " We'll stop here and try with the lead fish first."

We were a good distance out of the roadstead by now ; in fact we were well out into the fiord, for we had thoughtlessly forgotten all about mother's instructions, and the warnings old Thordis had treated us to.

I announced our plan of campaign.

" We'll stop here till we take one fish for everyone at home—Father, Mother, Sis, the maid, and our two selves—that makes six. The very minute we've caught them we'll steer North till we're standing off Oddeyri head, that's the best place to try fascinating the fishes with my flute."

" Right you are," said the small helmsman.

I took the lead fish and prepared to make the first cast with it.

" Let me catch the first one please," pleaded Manni.

" Very well, if you really want to," I answered. " But you know

the first fish ought to be for mother ; and she has a fancy for turbot."

" All right, I'll catch a turbot so."

The line payed out behind the lead fish until it reached the bottom. I passed it over to Manni then and he took in about a foot and a half of it first, and then wound it round his fist. He did this because he knew that turbot swim just about that much above the bottom. Then he watched his bait like a young lynx. Meantime, I took from my pocket two of the French cakes. Manni was quite right—they were delicious cakes. Suddenly he cried out, " There's a turbot biting ! "

" Well, pull a little then."

He did as I bid him ; but presently he called out again, " He's got away—slipped off the hook."

" Never mind. There are lots of good fish in the sea. You'll catch another before you know where you are, you'll see."

Indeed the lead fish hadn't had time to sink to the bottom before it was snapped up again. " Nonni," cried the fisherman, " I've got another bite."

" Can't be a turbot this time, Manni, the hook isn't deep enough. It must be a cod. Is it a big one ? "

" I'm afraid not ; there's scarcely any pull on the line."

" Hard luck. Pull it in anyway."

A second later Manni jerked a tiny little cod, all quivering and wriggling, out of the water. It dropped into the boat beside the seat.

" What a funny looking little baby it is," he cried laughing. " Look, it has a black spot right on the tip of its nose."

I slipped the hook gently out of the fish. It had taken it cleanly through its under lip.

" Manni, shall we let the little wretch off, put him back again, eh ? He's such a little one ? And then after all you were after a turbot, not a cod, and a baby cod at that ? "

"Yes, do let him off," he answered promptly. " That'll bring us good luck."

I threw the little cod back into the water and it made off like a streak of lightning. Manni made a fresh cast. It was hardly two minutes later when he began to shout out again, " A bite, a bite." He hauled in the line. This time it was a turbot. " For mother," he said, taking it off and putting it in the bottom of the boat. " Now, Nonni, it's up to you to catch the next five."

" Very good," I answered and let my baited line slip out quickly. I wanted it to go first to the bottom, but then I intended to take in several yards of it, because all I wanted now were cod, and I knew that cod usually keep at about that depth. From the very beginning I could feel a series of little jerks on the line. The water under us was simply swarming with fish. All the same, they wouldn't bite properly for all their nibbling. It was only after a good while I felt a frantic pull. " I've got a big fellow," I exclaimed, hauling hard at the line. Manni watched attentively for the fish to come in sight in the clear water.

Suddenly he cried out, " Oh, look, Nonni, you've taken two fish at one shot."

And there sure enough were two cod, one a great, big fellow, the other quite small, hanging from the two hooks. I took the big one off. He was over two feet long. I put him carefully aside with the turbot. When I came to picking the little one off the hook, I noticed on the snout just such a little black spot as had beautified the nose

of Manni's baby catch. But what was my surprise when looking closer I saw the same wound in the lip. The wretched little thing had let itself be taken a second time. Manni, of course, was no less astonished than I.

"But we'll keep him this time, Nonni, sha'n't we?" he demanded.

"If you like," I replied. "He's for you, then, and the big fellow for father."

It didn't take me ten minutes to secure three more. I took up my oars again, Manni went to the tiller once more, and then off we went, full speed ahead, and northward bound. When we came abreast of Oddeyri head, I shipped oars and lay back to rest a little, because I had been rowing so hard that I was perspiring all over. The little boat rode the waves easily and lightly. Indeed it was beautifully calm, and the silence seemed listening to us.

All the same this spot that seemed so secure was not without danger.

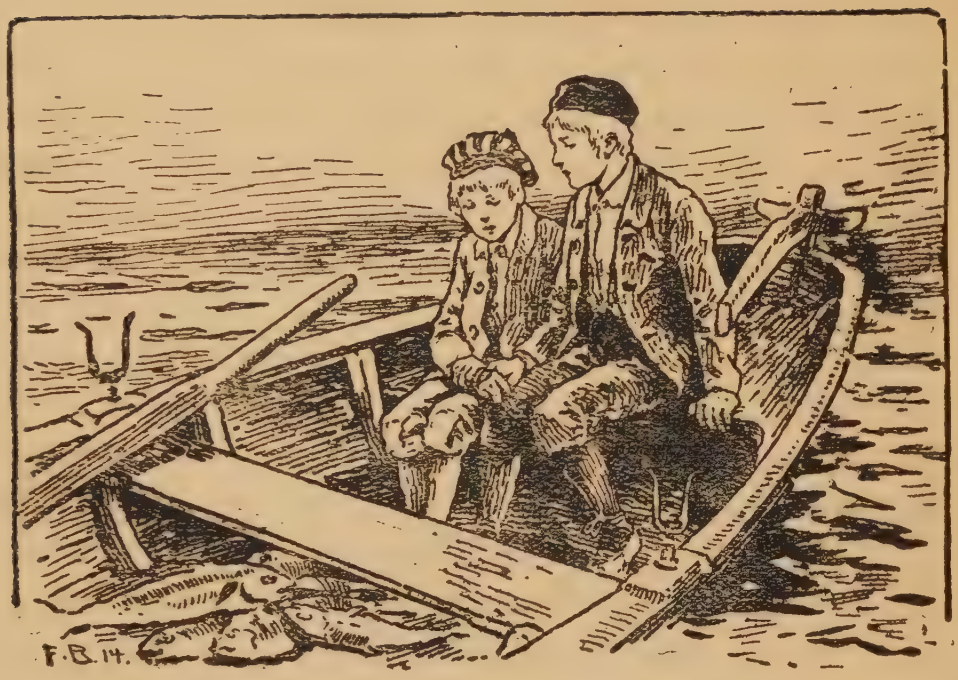
At the ebb tide there was a strong current in the fiord running out to sea ; and at the flood the tide set in so rapidly that it used to make quite a sea as it ran past the rocks. At the far side of the Head the fiord opened out, and further still to the North its waters were lost in those of the high seas, and one reached the Atlantic. It was for these reasons we had been absolutely forbidden to double this dangerous headland. Nevertheless, without, it is true, any deliberate wish on our part, we were already very nearly in the danger zone. Such was our silly thoughtlessness that we paid no attention to anything but our fish and our flute playing.

" Now keep a sharp look out," I ordered Manni. " All eyes on the water till we see will the fish come up to listen to me playing."

" Yes, yes, Nonni. Hurry up and begin," answered Manni, stretching himself half over the gunwale of the boat, while I began to play the prettiest tunes I knew. We spent a good while like that ; I playing and he watching. A sudden cat's-paw of wind, the slighest ripple in the water, and we were all excitement. Every moment we expected to see a fish poke his head up over the surface to hear me better. We had eyes, ears, and thoughts for nothing in the whole world except the fish I was most certainly going to fascinate. All the same these fish had a nasty way of disappointing our expectations. They persisted in staying at the bottom of the sea.

" What a long time they're taking about it," said Manni at last.

For my part I was beginning to lose all patience with them. Could Mr. Angrim have been wrong about it ? Oh, no, that was quite impossible. Hadn't he said I must keep at it, persevere even if the fish seemed to be taking no notice. Let me but keep at it then. All hope was not yet lost.



"There we sat side by side, neither of us daring to speak."

FACING DEATH

Alas, absorbed as we were with our double duty, playing for the fishes, and watching for them to rise, we had not noticed the sudden change in the weather. The sky had become over-clouded and the wind blew fresh and damp. A thick fog veiled the shores. Spreading by little and little, it reached across the waters till everything showed up as in a menacing twilight. To complete our discomfiture, the ebb-tide had begun to run, and we were slipping rapidly forward, our little boat drifting fast round the fatal headland of Oddeyri. All unconsciously we were sailing at full speed straight for the open sea!

My brother was the first to perceive our plight. "Nonni!" he exclaimed suddenly. "What's up? There's no land in sight!"

" No land in sight ! " I repeated mechanically, then I looked round me and saw, like my little brother, nothing more solid on any side than the soft, monotonous masses of the fog. I was horror-stricken. " Oh, dear God, we are lost ! " The cry slipped from me in my terror. I flung my flute to the bottom of the boat, and jumped for my oars.

" Quick, Manni, put her head-on for the town."

He sprang to the rudder, and then suddenly paused, irresolute, looking at me for guidance. "Which way?" he asked briefly. " I don't know the direction."

I tried vainly to orientate myself, but no, South, North, East and West were all unfindable points behind that uniform grey cloak of changing, swirling fog. Then it struck me with a new sense of fear that we must have already drifted too far to be able to run the boat in on either side on to a sandy beach. Round the headland the cliffs broke steeply down to the sea, a tangle of jutting rocks and boulders. It would be out of the question to make a landing on such a shore, even if we could reach it through the fog. Then what were we to do ? Truly we were in danger, in danger of death !

Manni clutched the helm and wept. Through his tears he looked half hopefully at me. After all I was the leader and he was waiting for my decision . . . At length I spoke.

" Manni, haven't you an idea which side is South ? "

He looked all round him, right and left, and tried to puzzle it out. Suddenly he shook his head.

" No good, Nonni. I simply can't find it."

" Then, God help us, because I can't either. I haven't even the vaguest idea which direction it is."

For a long minute neither of us stirred. We sat quite motionless and watched the creeping fog thickening and closing in upon us. At last I took up the oars.

" I'm not going to sit doing nothing anyway. I'll row somewhere and we'll trust to chance for the direction," I said.

For a while, then, I pulled hard. The little boat shot along through the colourless, calm water. But where to, towards the cliffs on the East or West ? Or, perhaps, with luck, our prow was pointing townward through the fog ?—yet even if it were it would be no use ; because in that case, row as I might, I would not be able to drive the boat forward, and for all my efforts we would only be slipping back with the current. But perhaps, and this thought was most horrible of all, perhaps I was rowing northward, every stroke of the oars helping to hurry us to our doom. These terrible thoughts quite paralysed my efforts. I shipped the oars, stepped down to the stem of the boat and sat down by my little brother. There we sat side by side neither of us daring to speak. After a little while Manni broke the silence.

" Why did you give up rowing, Nonni ? "

" Because it was quite useless. I didn't know the direction, and no more did you."

That silenced him again for a little. Then after a pause, " It's frightful," he said.

" Yes," I answered. And truly our position was frightening. Without stirring or speaking we sat there staring at the dead fish in a silver pile at our feet. After what seemed a long time, Manni turned towards me. His eyes were full of unshed tears.

" My poor Manni ! " I exclaimed, quite overcome with pity,

and I put my arms protectingly about him. " Why you're quite cold. Your hands feel frozen, and you're pale. Do you feel very bad ? "

" Oh, no, it's nothing at all, Nonni. But I am really frightfully cold."

" My poor man, I'd give anything to be able to help you."

" No, really, Nonni. It'll soon pass off."

Alas, I knew it would not pass, that it was only the beginning of our sufferings. But I took good care not to suggest to Manni what I thought. Every moment the damp and the cold became more and more intense and penetrating. A strange, sinister gloom that was almost a half darkness crept over everything. Could it be nightfall already, or was it only the fog thickening about us ? We hadn't an idea, because we had lost all count of the passing of time.

I pressed Manni close against me to try to keep him warm. I was so fond of this little brother of mine, and I couldn't bear to see him suffering so. I made him put his head on my breast and close his eyes. For a long time we lay like that. Watching Manni I could see that he was failing fast. His face, usually so healthy and rosy, looked pinched and wan. How I blamed myself. It was all through my fault that he was suffering so. At last he opened his eyes and spoke again.

" Still no sign of land ? " he asked, hopelessly.

" No sign, and we're making straight out for the open sea."

" How cold it is," he answered. " I was trying to go asleep, but I couldn't on account of the cold."

My poor little brother's words were like so many stabs with a cruel knife. What could I do ? I had nothing at all to wrap him up

in and keep him warm. Then the supply of cakes and fruit that were in our pockets came into my mind. They mightn't be much use for keeping out the cold, still perhaps we should be less miserable if we weren't hungry.

" Would you like something to eat ? " I asked my small brother. " Yes, but I'm not really hungry, only cold, " he answered.

" Something to eat will do us both good," I assured him. He agreed, and we set to and ate almost our entire little stock of provisions. It did indeed do us some good, if not very much ; and it cheered us up. Still the cold remained. I began to suffer a good deal from it myself. I took Manni's little hands between mine and was terrified. They felt like icicles. His face was corpse-like, grey and lifeless. At all costs the poor youngster must be warmed up. A good idea occurred to me. I was wearing a fine warm coat. I slipped it off quickly.

" Manni," I commanded. "Stand up and get into this."

" No, Nonni; don't; you'll get ill if you do," he protested.

" No fear ; I'm much older than you, and I can stand the cold quite easily. Quick, let me put it on."

" I don't believe you can stand the cold without your jacket. Keep it, Nonni; please do."

" What ! " I exclaimed. " I could stand that much ! Do you forget the day I was out for hours under the snow on the road from Akureyri to Hals. I was a whole year younger then, too."

" Yes—but you were ill after that."

" Only for a night. You know I was quite all right next morning," I reassured him.

At last he yielded. I wrapped him up in my warm reefer

and buttoned it carefully across his light blouse. Then cuddling up together in the stern we closed our eyes and tried to go to sleep. After a short while I opened my eyes again and glanced at Manni, he seemed to me to be already a little better. Beyond doubt the warm coat had done him good. This delighted me so much that I almost forgot the terrible cold that now gripped me. For all that, Manni didn't seem to be sleeping, though he kept his eyes shut.

" Are you asleep ? " I asked in a whisper.

His eyes opened at once and he shook his head. He twisted round and sat up.

" I've got an idea," he said. " You'll never guess ! It's because we haven't said our night-prayers that we can't get asleep, I'm sure. Mother says you go asleep quicker and have nice dreams if you've said your prayers first. Supposing we say our prayers, Nonni ? "

" Yes—let's."

So, on our knees at the bottom of the boat, we said the night prayers we would have said at home before going to bed. We both said our own special prayers, and said them to ourselves ; but when we had done I asked Manni to repeat for me a prayer in verse, which Mother had taught him but I didn't know. So he joined his hands again and said aloud that dear Icelandic prayer :—

Friend of Children, Jesus, stay
Near my side, night and day.
Hold me close with Thy left Arm,
With Thy right shield me from harm ;
And if tonight I come to die
May those Arms bear me on high,
In your Heaven let me be
Forever close, dear Lord, to Thee.

Round my bed four sentries post,
Pure angels from Your bright-winged host.
Through the dark their watch and ward
Shall guard me if You tell them, Lord ;
Evil things shall fly away,
When their shining makes night day.

We said one more " Our Father " after this ; then we sat down again with our arms tight round one another, locked in a close hug.

" Now it's easier, isn't it ? " asked Manni full of confidence.

" Oh, yes—much," I replied.

" And you're sure Our Lord heard our prayers, aren't you ? "

" Of course, I am, Manni."

" Mother said too," he went on reflectively, " that God always hears our prayers if we say them properly and believe He will hear them. That's just what we've done, isn't it ? So we needn't be afraid any more, Nonni. Our Lord and his angels are on our side now."

My little brother often talked like that and I was quite used to his trusting piety, but at this terrible crisis his words made such a deep impression on me that I actually began to cry softly.

" So now," went on the matter-of-fact small voice, " we can lie down again and we'll certainly go asleep. And just as certainly God will come and save us."

Too much moved to speak, I answered my very dear little brother by pressing him to me more closely than ever. I knew that he was much holier than I, and it seemed to me that it was God Himself Who had been reassuring me by his lips. My Manni was a really good little boy, so that everyone who knew him had to love him.

Now he was like my angel guardian to me. It was he who had suggested that we should pray, and it was listening to the hot fervour of the words that came from his innocent heart that my despair had melted away and given place to hope.

We snuggled down by the stern once more, as close together as ever we possibly could, and this time sleep came.

Stretched on the planks of this frail skiff, surrounded by the heavy trailing fog, hurried forward by the fierce current of the Eyjafyordur, we sailed out into the unknown, out into the open sea—but our angels were guarding us.

"The sea all about was torn and tossing, and the boat shuddered under the hammering of the waves."

"SHE BLOWS!"

How long did our sleep last? I do not know. But our awakening was sudden.

All at once we felt a grinding jolt, and were shot forward, sprawling on the bottom of the boat. All round us we could hear an extraordinary and terrifying noise. It was a kind of loud moaning and hissing mixed together. At the same time a deluge of water beat down upon our boat. The sea all about was torn and tossing, and the boat shuddered under the hammering of the waves. But the strangest part of the whole thing was that there wasn't even a breath of wind. Then the downpour stopped with an abruptness almost as startling as its beginning.

We tried to get up, but, after having slept so long, we found

our limbs so cramped that we could hardly move them at all. Our first efforts ended in immediate and sudden collapse, and after that the stiffness in our legs and arms, and the pitching of the boat, prevented us from rising from our knees, and we had to cling to the thwarts of the boat to avoid being thrown out of her altogether. Then the extraordinary noise burst out again right beside us so that we shrieked out with terror. The thick fog, which completely shut out everything from sight, added to our fear the horror of the unknown. Absolutely stunned with fright, we were at first struck speechless. At last, however, Manni spoke.

" Why is the sea so rough, Nonni ? There isn't a breath of wind."

" What ?—How do you expect me to know ? " I answered shortly.

" And the downpour ! A minute ago it was raining cats and dogs, and now it's quite stopped ? "

" I don't know what can be up," I replied, watching the waves that boiled about the boat in mad disturbance. It wasn't just big waves, the great, swelling breakers that you sometimes see, even after the wind has dropped, coming rolling in from the ocean ; this was a sort of glorified choppiness with the waves dashing in every direction, colliding, recoiling, vanishing and rising again.

My little brother clung to me with a terrified clutching. "What's making the sea so queer and rough ? " he repeated.

" Perhaps a big liner has just passed us and we're caught in its wake. Or perhaps it's an earthquake."

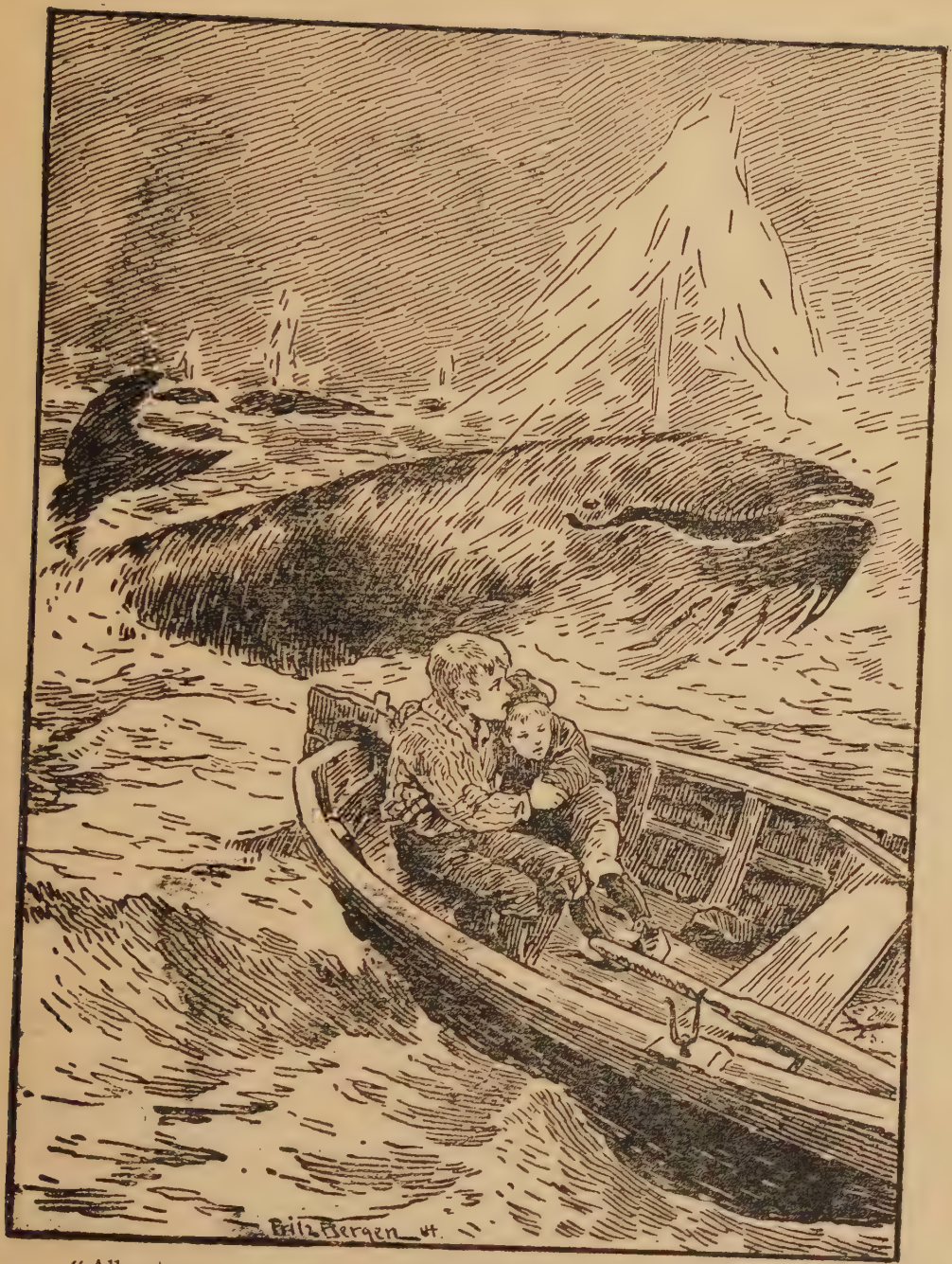
The words were hardly out of my mouth when our boat was struck and lifted by a great wave—much the biggest that yet had

tossed us. It came so suddenly, apparently out of nowhere and without any reason, that we were quite panic-stricken. We stared out in the direction whence this giant wave had come. All at once we saw something which nearly maddened us with fright. Right beside us, not more than a few yards away, we saw come up out of the water a monster, black as coal, huge beyond belief. At that very moment we heard again the loud, harsh moaning sound that was so horrible, and we saw a column of white smoke burst from this terrible monster, leaping straight up into the air. Then what seemed white smoke began to fall, but it was water and drenched us like heavy rain.

I was able now to explain all these strange signs, a storm without wind, rain that came and stopped like a tap turned on and off, and waves that galloped all ways at once, as if the white horses had lost their riders. We were in the middle of a school of whales and it was their gambollings that tossed and tore the calm sea in this weird way.

I saw at once how full of danger our position was now, because, of course, our little boat, though altogether beneath the notice of these giants, was also altogether at their mercy. If one of them had taken it into his head to come to the surface from underneath our little craft, he would hurl it skyward like so much matchwood, shattering its thin sides in a thousand pieces. The quicker we got out of this dangerous locality the better.

Not a moment was to be lost. I sent Manni back to his helm and snatching up the oars began to row hard. I wanted to put a safe distance between these terrible monsters and us. I pulled for all I was worth and the boat sprang forward like a live thing. I saw



"All at once we saw something which nearly maddened us with fright . . . . a monster, black as coal, huge beyond belief."

the whale's immense bulk rise out of the water, turn slowly and plunge, his huge tail slapping the surface with a loud report. Thanks to my almost frantic efforts, we were out of reach of the whales before very long and sailing once more on a calm and waveless sea. I went on rowing for all that because I wanted to get as far away as possible from these terrible kings of the deep. At last I put up the oars and sat down once more beside my brother. Although the adventure with the whales had, of course, excited us both extraordinarily, we hadn't a word to say—we were too exhausted, too worn out with exposure and trouble.

" What time is it ? " asked Manni at length.

" About midnight, I'd say."

" I'm sure it must be later, it's at least two or three."

He was perhaps right. We had been asleep for a good long time. All my old worry about Manni came back to me because he looked extremely done up. I suggested to him to try if rowing for a little might not warm him up a bit.

" But," said I, " only try one oar, because you're too small to manage two ; they'd only tire you out."

So I took one oar, and he sat down and pulled the other. After a bit he spoke up again, " That was a good idea of yours. I feel better already."

" Then we'll go on for a bit, eh ? " I said encouragingly.

He was quite willing and we went on. Suddenly Manni jerked up his feet from the thwart boards, and shouted to me in frightened tones,

" What on earth is the matter ? the boat is filling with water."

I hastened to investigate this new misfortune. There was no

mistake about it. There was a leak in the bottom of the boat and the water had already risen as high as the floor boards and was even now appearing above them. Not a moment was to be lost. We would have to stop the leak somehow or the water would submerge our boat. That would mean absolutely certain death.

I snatched up a couple of the floor boards and, stretching myself flat in the boat, my arm under the water, so high had it risen, I groped for the hole, which is to be found in the bottom of every Icelandic boat, and which is closed up with a wooden plug. It serves to clear the boat, when she is beached, of water which has got in through the seams. I decided that this wooden plug had sprung; it had. My fingers found the gaping hole.

" Manni," I cried, " the plug is gone. Quick, look about and see if you can find it."

" But where am I to look ? "

" Oh, it must be swimming about on the surface of the water in the boat somewhere."

So Manni, kneeling on the seats of the boat, searched every one of the sections—in vain. Meanwhile, I kept the palm of my hand jammed down on the hole, but in spite of that, and though I pressed my hardest, some water of course got in. I was shuddering all over with cold shivers, and wet through and through, for I was kneeling in the icy water.

" For Heaven's sake, Manni, hurry up ! I can't hold back the water much longer, its climbing up round my arm every moment."

" I can't find the plug," he answered. " It's lost !"

I was in despair. Then an idea struck me.

" Get out your knife," I ordered, " and cut off the sleeve of my shirt, as near as you can to the shoulder."

Manni did as I told him, and put my sleeve into my left hand. I rolled it up into a tight wad, and shoved it into the yawning hole. Then at last I was able to get up. The boat was half full of water. We searched for the baling tin. It was not to be found. We had left it behind. The danger was urgent, because we were already so deep in the water that a gust of wind, or a wave only a little bigger than tiny wavelets that ran past us would have filled and sunk us. There seemed, however, nothing for it, we could only sit staring at the water.

Suddenly Manni cried out, " I've got it, let's use our caps."

" That's it, . . a jolly good idea of yours, Manni . . . to work . . . to work."

We filled our caps and dashed the water over the side. The " bales " were so small that the boat emptied very slowly. But at last the work was done. In the clearing process we found the plug. It was caught between two cross boards at the very bottom of the boat. I quickly put it back in its proper place, and then I was able to get on my sodden sleeve again, fixing it up with the line from our lead fish. This new danger beaten back, we went once more to the stern and sat down there together.

We weren't long finding out what a night spent in an open boat is like when there's a thick, dark fog about and you're wet and it's piercing cold.

" If only God would come to our aid," I moaned.

" He will come ; of course, He'll come," answered Manni. "Haven't we prayed to Him ? "

" We're in a desperately bad way all the same, Manni."

" That's true. But mother says that when God doesn't hear our prayers at once, it's only to ' try ' us."

" Well, I hope He'll take pity on us soon, and stop 'trying' us, Manni dear, because I feel utterly done up."

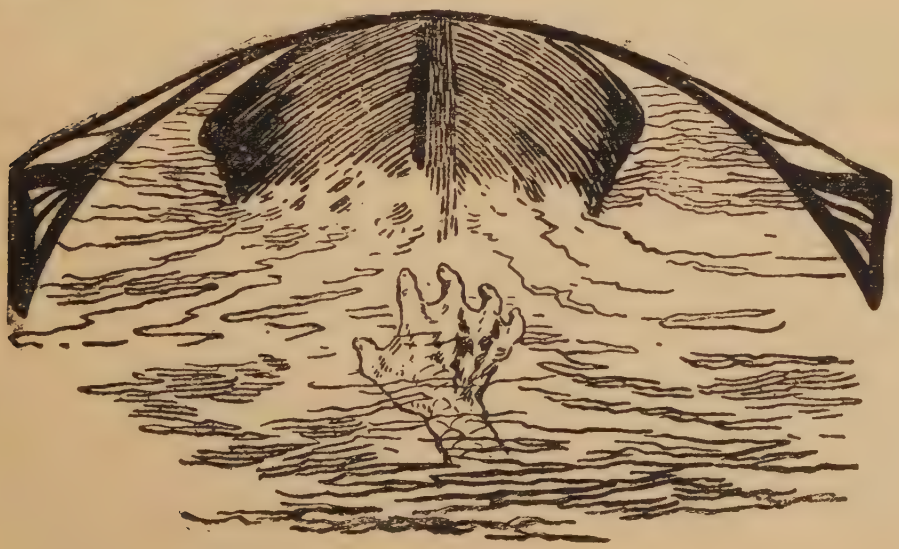
" Poor Nonni! Why, you're drenched to the bone, and you've no coat either. I wish you'd take yours back."

" No, no," I exclaimed hastily. " I won't have it."

I had to use force to make him keep the coat. After a bit he gave up the effort to make me take it back, and tried in other ways to cheer me up. Help, he insisted, couldn't be far off now. Meanwhile we both felt worse and worse. We got colder and colder till we were almost frozen and our limbs were quite crippled with it.

" Suppose we say another ' Our Father,' " suggested Manni. " God will hurry up and help us quicker then."

We said the " Our Father." Then in a sad, dead silence we waited . . . .



" . . . We were too exhausted, too worn out with exposure and trouble."

OUR VOW

By this time we were quite exhausted. We were soaked through, cramped with cold and shooting pains. We must have looked a very sad pair of castaways. In my torn shirt, with the sleeve looped up anyway at the shoulder, I suppose I looked the more wretched. But we were both really worn out. The utmost limit of endurance was almost reached. Unless help came quickly it would come in vain. Manni broke the gloom and silence that had fallen on us.

" How do you feel now, Nonni ? "

" Played out completely. I suppose you're pretty well done up too ?"

" Pretty well . . . I feel like as if I was going to go off at any moment . . . All the same, Nonni . . . I've got a plan. Sailors when they're ship-wrecked like us make a vow to God and then He saves them. I've often heard about them. Suppose we made a vow ? Then God would come quicker to save us."

" That's a first-rate plan, Manni. But what's the vow to be ? " I asked.

" Do you remember the stories Mother used to read us about the missioners out in pagan countries ? " he said by way of reply.

" Yes, Manni, I remember them well."

Mother had a " Life " of a very great missioner, and sometimes she used to talk to us about the missions in India, Japan and China. We were always immensely interested by these stories of hers; and in this moment of peril Manni's thoughts went back to them. He went on, " Do you remember then what a great saint that man, who was a missioner in the Indies and Japan, was ? "

" Well," I answered again.

" Well then, Nonni, let's make a vow to our Lord that when we grow up we'll set to work to convert pagans for Him, like that great missioner."

I was taken aback a little by this proposal. It seemed to me that this vow was rather a rash one. In the end, however, I gave my consent.

" It's a big vow," I said, " but I'm quite willing to make it with you."

" Then let's make it at once, Nonni," he answered, " else it may be too late."

We recollected ourselves for a few moments and then we solemnly promised God that if He would save us from this terrible danger we would become missioners to the pagans when we grew up. When we had finished we looked round in every direction, hoping to catch sight of the help we had so fervently implored. Alas, nothing at all happened. We went back to our old seat in the stern.

It was now I noticed that Manni was getting worse and worse. To me he appeared to be on the point of death. I clasped his little body to me, flinging my arms about him. He closed his eyes, let his head rest on my breast, and then stayed quite still. He remained that way for quite a long time. Suddenly a chill spasm of horror gripped me. Had my little brother slipped quietly off ? Was he asleep ?—or was he not rather dead ?

" My God ! My God ! help us, help us," I repeated again and again.

All at once, to my great joy, Manni stirred in my arms, without, however, opening his eyes. He kept stretching out his little arms, murmuring over and over again, " Jesus, Jesus, " while a sweet smile played over his pale little face. I knew at once that Manni was dreaming, because he often talked that way in his sleep. In a few minutes more he was awake, rubbing his eyes and staring distractedly all around him. It was not hard to guess that he had travelled far from our castaway boat, and couldn't at first realise where he was. He seemed frightened for a moment, but I soothed him when the sad reality slowly dawned on him.

" Manni, old man," said I, " you've had a most beautiful quiet sleep. That ought to have done you good."

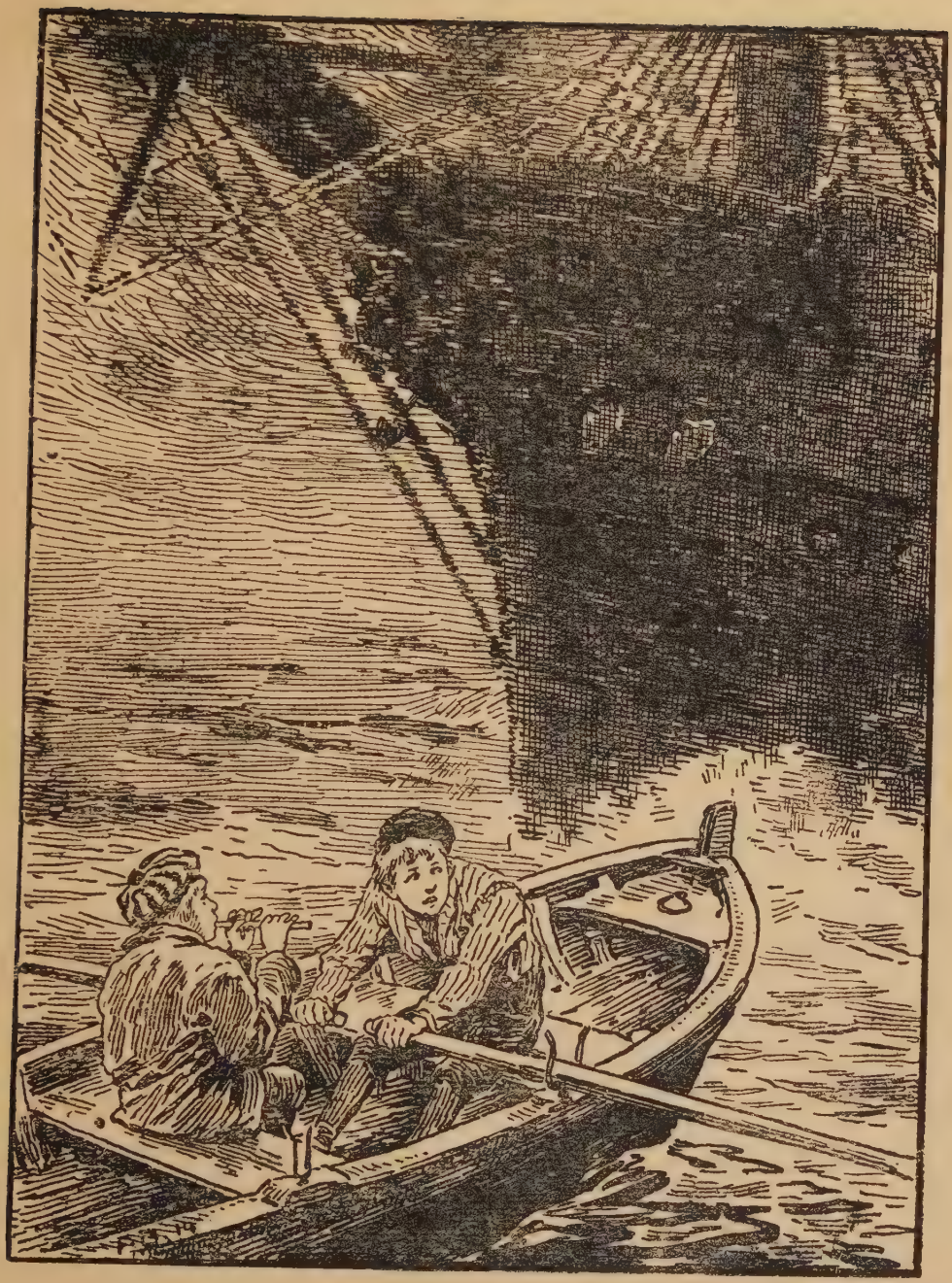
" Yes, indeed, Nonni—I'm only sorry I had to wake up."

" I'm sure. And what's more I think I can guess the reason."

" What do you mean ? "

" Because you kept on saying ' Jesus, Jesus.' You must have been having a lovely dream ? "

He blushed a little, looking at me steadily, his big, grave eyes full of surprise.



"Take my flute, Manni; it's there behind you—now blow as hard as ever you can."

" Did I really say that ? " he asked.

" Yes, Manni, and you were smiling and holding out your hands, as if you were talking to someone. Tell me your dream won't you ? " I pleaded.

He seemed a little embarrassed for a moment. Then, " I'd love to," he said quickly. " It won't take long either, because it was a very short dream."

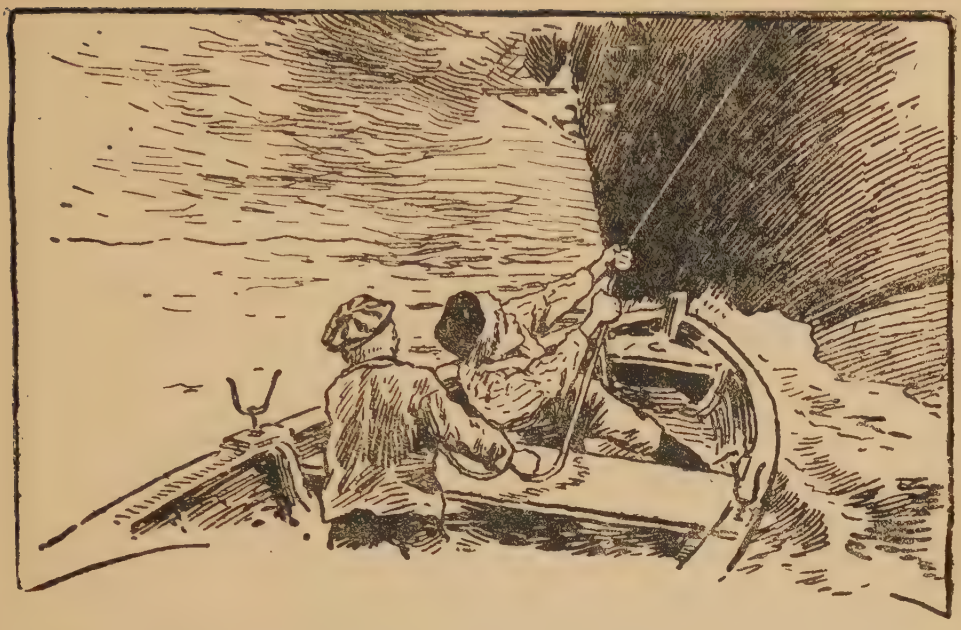
" After we had made our vow," he began, " I fell off to sleep and it seemed to me the great Apostle of the Indies came down from heaven to me. He took me by the hand and carried me up with him through the air to a place far, ever so far away from here. We came to a splendid city and in it was a very lovely church. He led me in. There I saw Jesus. He was standing at the altar and I ran forward towards Him. He came to meet me, holding out His arms for me and looking so good. We met in the very middle of the church. He embraced me. Then I woke up."

Manni's narrative had moved me greatly. " What a lovely, lovely, dream," I murmured.

" Oh, yes, yes," repeated my small brother, " it was a beautiful dream indeed. I can't tell you how happy I felt with Jesus' arms around me. I was carried quite away, ... overflowing with joy."

" That's not hard to believe, Manni. Our Lord seems to love you so much," I added.

" I'm sure He does," he answered with sweet simplicity. "And now I believe He means to come quickly to save us."



"For a few moments more the line continued to pay out freely. Then, with a jerk, it was taut. . . . I cried aloud with pain."

THE WARSHIP'S FISHING

We had barely stopped talking when we thought we caught far away in the distance a strange sound ; it seemed muffled, long-drawn and a little eyrie.

" Do you hear that, Manni ? " I exclaimed.

' Yes. What on earth can it be ? " he answered.

" I don't know. I've been trying to guess."

We sat without a stir now, as still as statues, listening with strained attention. In another minute the sound came again. We looked at one another without a word, not knowing what to make of it. We listened with renewed attention. Yes, there it came again drawn-out, sad, and weird, again and again and again, and always nearer and nearer.

Suddenly, in a flash, I recognised the sound. I fairly shouted to Manni,

" It's a ship coming through the fog ! And it's coming towards us."

" A ship?" he repeated. " But that weird cry, what does that mean ? "

" It's the ship's siren," I answered.

" We're saved, we're saved ! " he cried, full of joy. " Quick, let's thank God because it was He sent help."

" We knelt for a moment ; long enough for a fervent thanks that was also an alleluia. Then I got up hastily."

" One last effort, Manni," I said. " I'm going to row towards the ship, because otherwise she might easily pass us in this thick fog."

So having carefully noted the direction from which the sounds seemed to have come, I rowed as hard as I could in my exhausted condition to meet our rescuer.

Soon we saw, pushing slowly through the fog, something that loomed up black and huge.

" It's like a mountain," whispered Manni.

Indeed, the hull of the vessel seemed magnified many times in the floating fog-wreaths.

We had now to attract the attention of those on board, and particularly of the look-out, to our little boat. Getting as near as I could to the ship, I said to Manni, " Take my flute, Manni ; it's there behind you—now blow as hard as ever you can ! "

At the same time, I kept shouting " Help ! Help ! " at the top of my voice. Still no sign of the look-out.

" It's queer," said I to myself, " his station should be forward and quite close to us."

At last I caught sight of him for one second. My heart sank ; he was looking in the opposite direction. Then the bulwarks hid him from us again. Our boat was now right under the side of the great ship. We recognised her now that we were so close to her. It was the " Pandora," the French battleship we had visited the day before. It had steamed out of the Akureyri Harbour in the small hours of the morning and was bound now for France.

" What a funny meeting," remarked Manni.

We were now scarcely two yards from the cruiser's side.

" It can't be nobody's going to see us ? " went on my little brother with a new anxiety.

" It looks bad, I see no sign of anyone stirring."

Our very lives hung on those few seconds it would take the ship to pass us. The noise of her engines completely drowned both my shouting and Manni's flute. I was in an agony of fear. Suppose after all she should go by without noticing us. A moment ago we had been under her bows, and already her dark hull was slipping rapidly past us. She was going to run by without taking the smallest notice of our appeals. All at once I caught sight of a line trailing in the water. It was hanging over the side just at the spot whence the companion-way had been lowered. Instantly, I dipped my oars again, a couple of strokes brought me across the path of the trailing line. I was near enough to catch hold of it. At full speed I twisted it a couple of times round my wrist and gripped it hard. Then, in order not to be whipped out of the boat, I slipped under the rowing seat, which was screwed to the frame-work of the

little skiff. For a few moments more the line continued to pay out freely. Then with a jerk it was taut.

I cried aloud with pain. It seemed to me that my hand would be torn off my arm. Our little boat swung sharply round, came in line with the big ship and followed her. Manni regardless of his weakness came gallantly to my aid. Thanks to our united efforts we succeeded in giving the line a couple of turns round the seat and lashing it fast. By sheer good luck, the ship, moving through a thick fog, was steaming very slowly. Had it been otherwise, I could neither have picked up the line, nor have held and secured it when I did pick it up.

" Nonni," cried my brother suddenly. " We've lost an oar. Look, there it goes, bobbing up and down in the water."

It was unfortunately only too true. In our desperate efforts to grasp and hold the line, the oar had gone overboard and was now fast slipping astern in the wake of the ship. It was quite hopeless to think of recovering it.

When we had accomplished our task and made the line safe and fast, we began once more to shout and call our hardest. It was labour lost. The crash of the water round her screw drowned our voices. At length tired out, we gave it up.

" What's to be done now ? " I asked my brother.

His glance travelled over the towering side of the big ship, he was silent, thinking hard.

" Look there, Nonni ! " he cried suddenly. " Right over our heads, there, do you see, there's a porthole. Could you reach up to it with the oar you've got left ?"

" That's a ripping idea," I answered. " How on earth did you think of it ? "

I tried at once if I could reach up to the window. I could just manage it. I set to work knocking and banging with the oar on the thick glass.

" That's better than all our shouting," said I to Manni.

I was right. A couple of minutes had not elapsed before my brother was shouting to me through the noise.

" Look out ! There's someone at the window ! "

A hand drew the bolt and undid the catch ; a face appeared above us. Two black eyes were looking down on us with obvious interest.

" Hi, hi," I yelled up. " Help . . . we want help ! "

Without making any answer to this, the man continued to look down at us. He seemed astonished at seeing us there under the window. Clearly he didn't realise in the least our terrible plight. Almost immediately, the head disappeared again and the window was closed. We waited consumed, as you may well imagine, by a very agony of impatience and anxiety. Very soon, however, we saw a head thrust over the side above us, and looking down at us. It had the same black-eyed face that had looked at us through the porthole a moment before. In a few moments it was joined by others, and soon there was quite a row of them lining the bulwarks. All of them seemed absolutely astonished at the sight that met their eyes. Their owners began to gesticulate, to make signs to us, and to shout down to us, but, what with the threshing of the screw and throb of the engines, we could hear nothing at all.

" If they'd only have the sense to come and rescue us," moaned Manni, " I could cry with the cold."

" Patience, old man," said I, to encourage him. " They'll

come down for us now right away, you'll see. Once they have us on board they'll take care of us. Do you remember how decent they were to us yesterday ? "

" Do you think they'll let us have dry clothes ? "

" Of course they will—What's more I'm sure they'll put us into beautiful *warm* beds and give us something to eat. Then we'll feel all right again in no time."

" If only I could get warm again," groaned the poor little fellow, " I wouldn't mind anything else."

A great clashing going on above our heads made us both look up. They were folding back part of the side rails.

" They're going to lower the companion-way," murmured Manni, quite cheered up.

A moment later the flight of steps unrolled itself, as if my magic, down the black, overhanging side of the ship. An officer and a couple of sailors were coming down it to us. The sailors caught our boat, drew it to the foot of the ladder and secured it. They were carrying great big blankets in their arms. One of them jumped into our boat, picked Manni up and held him, while the other wrapped him up, then he took him up in his arms and carried him up the steps again. The second sailor wanted to do the same for me, but I was ashamed to be treated like a baby before everyone. I dodged him, and, making a terrible effort, but quite unaided, jumped out to the platform at the foot of the ladder. I must have looked miserable enough clinging there in my shirt-sleeves soaked as I was, deadly pale, and chattering with the cold. So they snatched me up quickly too, rolled me up in the wraps and carried me on deck.

" Manni in the top bunk and myself in the bottom one."

ON THE FRENCH MAN-OF-WAR

No sooner were we on deck than everyone came crowding round us. Officers and sailors and cadets all gathered about us. There was none of the gaiety of our last meeting, every face showed anxiety, some even consternation. An officer preceded the sailors, who carried us aft. We went down a wide staircase with bright brass banisters. This led to a little room quite differently fitted to the one we had been brought to before. In it we saw two bunks, one over the other. The officer pulled back their purple hangings. The beds had beautiful fresh linen, that shone snowy white, and blue woolly quilts. In the centre of the room there was a polished mahogony table and along the walls, on the opposite sides, ran settees upholstered in blue velvet.

At a word from the officer, the sailors deposited us still wrapped up one on each of these two blue sofas. Naturally I got up at once

and went over to sit next Manni. The officer gave some orders to the sailors, which we could make nothing of, except that, as he kept pointing, now to Manni, and now to me, we knew they were about us. The sailors saluted and left us. The officer then came over and began to feel our pulses.

" He must be a doctor," whispered Manni to me.

" Obviously," I answered, " and now you see what good hands we're in ; so there's no need to worry about anything."

" Rather, and, I say, didn't God rescue us splendidly ? "

" Yes, really, it was truly miraculous. But we must not forget, you know, that we've made Him a big vow. I wonder how we're ever going to be able to keep it."

" He'll help us to, Nonni," he answered.

Even as he spoke there came a light tap on the cabin door. " Come in ! " said the doctor. Two French boys about our own age made their appearance. The extraordinarily careful way they moved about the room surprised me. Evidently they thought us very ill, because they looked very solemn, and went about on tip-toe. One of them carried a big basin of hot water and the other a pile of fresh underclothing. Without getting up off my sofa, I stretched out my hand, and made friendly signs with my head. They responded at once, and seemed happy to find we weren't quite as ill as they feared. They then helped us to get off our sodden sea boots and our damp stockings and to wash our faces and hands in the hot water. Then when we had got into dry nightshirts we were hurried into bed—Manni in the top bunk and myself in the bottom one. When they were tucking us carefully in, my small boy sang out from above as he snuggled in between his blankets,

" Off we go—bound for France ! "

" Yes," I answered, " This is no time to back-out, though, is it ? "

The doctor made quite sure we were wrapped up comfortably ; then he gave us each a bowl of splendid hot soup to drink. That heated us up and comforted us like a ray of sunshine. A beautiful creeping warmth, a blessed sensation of tired peacefulness stole over us, and soon healing sleep had come to close our eyes.

We slept on peacefully for a good while—all through the long morning and afternoon at all events. Then at last we were awakened by a loud noise. The engine was letting off steam, before she stopped. I opened my eyes wide and looked round me. Immediately they fell on one of the French boys. He was sitting at the centre table reading. He got up at once and came over to me quickly, with a look that seemed to me full of kindly consideration.

" Could you tell me the time, please ? " I asked, naturally in Icelandic.

By way of answer, he only smiled at me ; and putting his hand on my chest tried to make me lie down again. Then he said something to me which might have been Chinese as far as I was concerned, and began carefully to tuck me up again. We would both have liked to have a little chat, but our first try wasn't much of a success. Neither of us could understand a word the other said. In the end, therefore, we were just looking at one another helplessly, so we shook our heads again in despair. Then we both began to laugh. Of course, that woke Manni up. And the small voice broke in,

" Nonni, how are you getting on ? "

" Splendid, Manni ! But I'm as hungry as a horse."

" So'm I ! " he replied, and with that he began to clamber out over the side of his bunk to see how I was getting on. That didn't suit our infirmarian at all. He caught hold of my small brother and promptly popped him back to bed. Manni, who wasn't used to being treated in this summary fashion, cried out indignantly,

" Nonni, Nonni, this little boy is holding me ; he won't let me get down."

" All right then, I'll go up to you," I answered and was just going to jump out of bed when I found myself caught in my turn by the French boy.

" Non ! Non ! " he protested, and forced me to lie down again. It was quite useless to try and resist. He kept on reiterating, " Non, non, non."

" He won't let me get up to you either, Manni," said I. " He keeps on saying, ' non, non, non,' to me. That's the way he says my name I suppose, but it don't sound a bit like ' Nonni ' really."

" He's saying it in such a queer way through his nose too," added my small brother.

I did my best to make our infirmarian realise that my name was Nonni and not ' *non* '. But he couldn't follow me at all. Indeed, the poor fellow seemed very cut up. He had, I'm sure, the doctor's orders to keep us both in bed, and he never expected to find us so disobedient. However, he cheered up and calmed down when he saw us both lying down quietly in our bunks again. After some time Manni broke the silence.

" If only they'd give us something to eat," said he.

" Ask the little French boy for something," I answered.

" That's no good ; he wouldn't understand me," he replied.

" Well, I'll try and make him understand by signs, then," I ventured.

So I called him over, and, by putting my hand to my mouth and other gestures, I did my best to let him see what I wanted. To my great delight, he realised what I meant at once. He nodded and smiled to me and then went off. He came back almost at once with the doctor, who shook hands with us both heartily, and seemed delighted when we protested that we were now quite recovered. He said a few words to the cadet, who vanished at once but returned quickly with our clothes, which had been washed and brushed and dried while we were sleeping. We were let get up then, but when we tried to give back some of our fine borrowed clothes, the doctor wouldn't hear of it. This was certainly more than kind of him, and we thanked him heartily.

We had only just finished dressing when the ship's cook in his snowy-white uniform came in. This time he carried, instead of a little wine and cakes, a regular full course dinner. He laid four places. Our infirmarian and the other French boy, who had helped to put us to bed the evening before, were to dine with us. It was a really jolly meal and during it we chatted with one another, the two French boys, of course, in French, and we two little Icelanders in Icelandic.

Manni and I were so hungry that we ate big helpings at first, so by the time the third course came we had had enough. But there were lots more to come. They kept on coming in fast. We were being banqueted like princes. Not being used to such luxurious fare we had to content ourselves with just tasting most of the dishes to keep our French friends company. They for their part were

accustomed to these long dinners. So they fared better than we. They pressed us to eat more and seemed quite concerned at the smallness of the meal we were making. When we were quite finished, however, they took us up on deck.

There a surprise awaited us. For the ship actually had stopped and now she was quite motionless in that calm sea. A little way off, lay another boat, smaller, a good deal, than the " Pandora," but a beautiful ship for all that. At her stern she displayed the flag of Denmark.

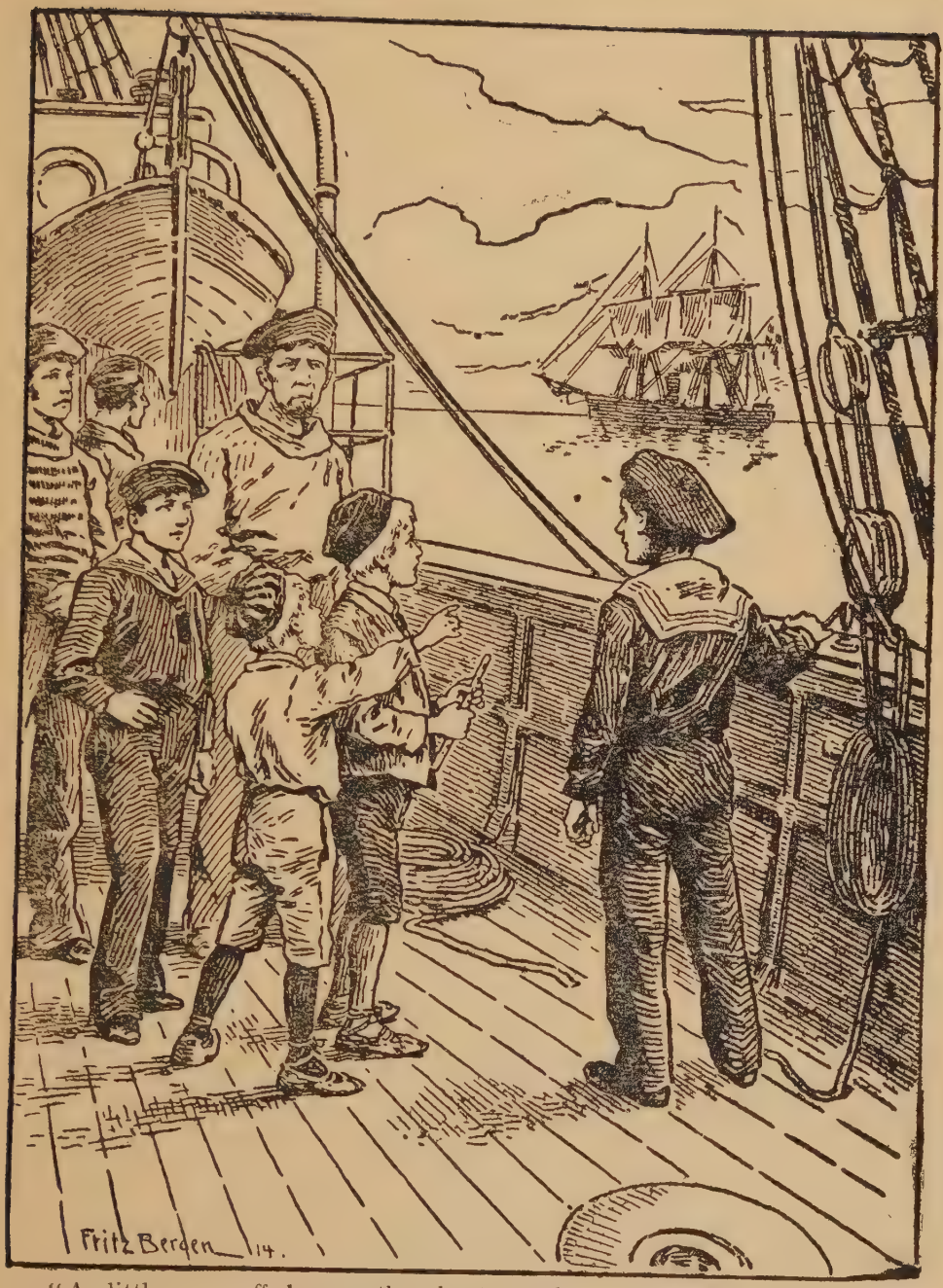
" It can't be—yes it is—it's the ' Fylla.' Isn't it, Nonni ?" exclaimed Manni, after he had inspected her attentively for a little.

I looked hard in my turn, and then decided with joy that my little brother had made no mistake about it. It was really the Danish warship, " Fylla," which in summer often paid a visit to Akureyri. She would be en route for our native town at this very moment, and could thus bring us home with her.

" Isn't it like a miracle the way God has looked after us ?" whispered Manni to me.

" Indeed it is His doing," I answered, feeling thankful to Him from the bottom of my heart.

Most of the officers of the " Pandora " had gathered around us on the deck, all of them were full of kind expressions of concern for what we had gone through. At first we were a little shy and awkward but these splendid sailors, and more particularly our little midshipmen, were so friendly and kind that all our embarrassment quickly vanished. We were expected to shake hands all round and I can tell you our hand-shakes were firm, hearty ones. It almost seemed that these kindly faces had caught something of the cheery



"A little way off lay another boat, smaller a good deal, than the 'Pandora,' but a beautiful ship for all that."

bounty with which the sun was lighting up the dancing waters around us.

As we came to leave the ship the captain himself was waiting for us at the top of the flight of little steps. A middle-aged man, he was broadly and solidly built, with a handsome face and a kindly expression, that was almost paternal.

"We must thank him nicely for all his hospitality," said I to Manni.

We went towards him a little timidly. He stood waiting for us with an encouraging smile.

I seized his hand and pressed it hard, shaking it vigorously by way of expressing how genuine was my gratitude while I thanked him, in Icelandic of course, both for having saved us, and for being so kind to us while on board his ship.

Then I turned to Manni. "Now," I said, "you must say thanks too."

My little brother took the officer's other hand and with a swift movement raised it to his lips and kissed it. The captain freed his hands and putting them on the top of our heads held us at arm's length, smiling down on us. This magnificent person was visibly moved, I could see his eyes bright with unshed tears. It struck me that perhaps he was thinking of his own little ones, far away, in his own land. . . . .

Before we climbed down the side we turned once more to wave adieu. These kindly folk answered in a fashion that left us, despite our ignorance of French, in no doubt of their good wishes. At the foot of the stairs we found not only our own little tub awaiting us, but the fine steam launch of the "Pandora." We were quite overcome with pride at this new honour. In the launch, which was

flying the French tricolour, sat our doctor. The little infirmarian and his companion had got aboard her too. We got in and sat down beside the doctor. Then some of the sailors made our little boat fast to the launch, and stepped back. The next minute we were off, making in straight line for the " Fylla." We turned for the last time and waved our caps to the crew of the " Pandora," who signalled back to us. Then slipping fast through the calm sea we saw the gap, which separated us from that hospitable ship, grow wider every moment. For a long time we talked constantly of our stay on board her and I am sure we never quite forgot it.

"We turned for the last time and waved our caps to the crew of the 'Pandora.'"

ON THE DANISH BATTLESHIP

It was one of those superb northern evenings. The fog and cold of the night before had completely vanished and in our short trip from one boat to the other we enjoyed some lovely sky and water effects. In these latitudes the sun never leaves the sky at this time of the year, and now it hung in glory low over the western horizon. The hard glare of its day-time splendour was merged little by little in the softer, tender light of its midnight shining. Golden light was no longer monotonously predominant, for it was toned to every shade from royal purple to pale rose. A wonderful pathway, the rainbow's miracle in colour, stretched out before us, ocean endless, from our diamond drenched prow to the fervent disc of the sun. It is hopeless to describe this highroad of light, all sparkling in motion, as if it were a liquid mosaic of pearls and precious stones. It was a path in fairyland.

We found ourselves all at once under the companion-way of the "Fylla." Two Danish officers in spick-and-span uniforms were standing waiting to receive us. The doctor, the two young cadets and ourselves went on board, while the sailors stayed in the launch. The Danish sailors received us in that open-hearted, friendly way, which is so characteristic of their nation. Indeed, we were the object of a certain curiosity and surprise, as we followed our doctor and the officers across the deck to present ourselves to the commander in his cabin. Everything on board this model ship was beyond belief white and clean. The deck was washed and pumice-stoned till it was perfectly spotless. The cannon, indeed all the metal work, winked and glittered like brand new brass. A fine stairway took us to the captain's cabin, which proved no less splendid than that on the "Pandora."

The captain was still a young man. With his black mustache and cropped hair brushed straight back, he looked alert and distinguished, but at the same time kindly. He came towards our friend the doctor, shook his hand warmly and motioned him into a big red velvet arm-chair. Then he came to us, shook hands with us too, and made us sit down on a seat that ran all round under the wainscotting and was also upholstered in luxurious red velvet. Then the captain and the doctor began to chat in French. Of course, Manni and I couldn't follow the conversation, but we noticed that it seemed to interest the cadets a lot. Moreover, it was easy to see that it turned on us. The doctor was certainly telling our story to the captain, for both of them, and our two young friends also, glanced at us frequently and were smiling a good deal.

"It's maddening not understanding a word," whispered Manni,

" especially because I'm sure they're talking about us all the time."

" It is annoying," I answered, " but don't bother, I'm sure they're not saying anything bad about us."

At this moment there came a little knock at the door and a steward entered. He was carrying a tray on which stood six glasses, a bottle of champagne, and a big silver basket full of little cakes. He set the tray down on the table, drew the cork and proceeded to fill two of the glasses with the golden liquid. He did all this as solemnly as if he were performing a sacred rite. Then he turned to the captain for orders. The good captain for his part was also at a loss. He made a sweeping gesture that seemed to take in all four of his young guests and to be addressed to the doctor. The latter smiled and made a reply, which we guessed to be the required leave. At all events we were very pleased and proud to see the captain take the champagne from the steward and fill out four glasses for us.

I say fill out but really, with a fatherly eye on Manni, he only filled them quarter full. We gathered around the table and clinked glasses with the two officers. Manni gallantly tossed off his little bumper; and remarked to me in a low voice that it was a splendid wine, and he could have drunk a full glass with pleasure. But in reality he was quite contented with what he had got. Then at last our interview came to an end.

Manni and I thanked our good Frenchmen and bade them good-bye. In particular, we expressed our gratitude to the doctor for his care of us. He only laughed and patted us on the head kindly. So we shook hands with the two little cadets. Then we dashed down the steps, and jumped into the launch again to say good-bye to our sailor friends, who were waiting. The launch made back towards the

" Pandora " while we, from the Danish ship's deck, waved a last good-bye to her crew. Then, without delay, the two stately ships resumed their respective journeys, the Frenchman heading into the wide ocean, we making for the familiar harbour of Akureyri.

I'm certainly not going to tell you in detail all the kind attentions which were lavished on myself and my brother, during our stay on board the " Fylla." Her officers equalled in kindness and friendliness our hosts on the " Pandora." We knew a little Danish, so we could make shift to be understood, and that, of course, made our intercourse much pleasanter. Any one who knows the Danes knows they are a kindly and considerate people. Everything possible was done to make our stay on board the " Fylla " the jolliest time imaginable.

We were shown all the sights of the ship. At the officers' mess, the second lieutenant produced two beautiful little dirks, and slipping the sword belts round our waists buckled them on. We were let wear them all the rest of the time we stayed on board. There were three little Danish middies on board, and naturally we became close friends. They were certainly first-rate chaps at any lark. We had supper together that evening. During the meal my little brother asked one of them how the two big ships had come to a standstill at sea miles from one another. They couldn't, he argued, have spoken to one another at such a distance. Our new friend was able to explain this quite simply. They made signs to one another, like we had made to the French, only they were signs that could be seen a long way off and understood. This sign-making with flags they called signalling. Thus the French ship signalled to the " Fylla" :—" *Have on board two little Icelanders picked up in the Eyjafyordur. They*

hail from Akureyri. Will you take them and bring them home?"—To which the "Fylla" answered promptly—"*Yes.*" Then they stopped the two ships; we know what happened after that ourselves.

It was our friend's turn next to ask us for our story. We told them all our adventures—our fishing, the fog, the whales, that awful night, our vow, and our miraculous escape. When we got to the whales they told us that they also had sailed through a school of them, and had watched with delight the gambols of these vast monsters and the great columns of water they sent heavenward in their sport. Two of the whales had even kept pace alongside the ship for a time before plunging suddenly.

"It's obvious they were the same fellows that nearly drowned us," Manni agreed. But the little Danes could not understand how whales could have wet us; they thought it must have been a great welter of spray from a wave that had drenched us. We enjoyed our chat so much that we stayed on talking till it was quite late, and all the deck was bathed in the purple glory of the midnight sun.

At last it was time to be off to bed. Manni and I found bunks ready for us in the sleeping quarters of our new friends. It wasn't long either before sleep came to close our eyes and in spite of the long rest we had had on board the "Pandora" we did not wake until the noonday sun was hot above us. The moment we did wake up we knew that the "Fylla" was already anchored in the harbour of Akureyri, for a complete silence reigned, where the throb of her engines had been insistent. We got up quickly and dressed to go on deck. Sure enough we found the "Fylla" had dropped anchor in the very same berth as the "Pandora" had occupied two days before.

No sooner had we made our appearance on deck than some of the crew gathered about us, and began good humouredly to congratulate us on our home-coming and joke us about our adventures. Very soon, however, our little Danish friends came in sight, looking for us to carry us off to lunch with them and the officers' mess. We had a special dainty for lunch that was to the Danes what plum-pudding is to the English or salads to a Frenchman. It was a kind of rice pudding with a frosting of castor sugar and cinnamon and a little core of butter at the centre of it. After lunch we felt we ought to go and see the captain again. He received us most graciously, as king us in jesting allusion to the little dirks swinging at our sides, if we would not like to join the Danish navy as midshipmen. We answered that we could not consider so important an offer without consulting our parents.

" Well said !" he cried laughing, and then he added in a different tone, "Very early this morning—before we were well into the harbour —a boat came longside, looking for news of you two. Yes," he went on, as we stared at him in surprise, " your people were naturally very worried about your disappearance, half the craft in the harbour were out looking for you. Of course, I was delighted to be able to put their minds at rest with good news of you. I told them I had you both on board in perfect health, and that I would send you back home as soon as it was reasonably possible to do so."

At that we got up from our seats, and shaking hands with the captain we thanked him for all his kindness to us.

" My dear children, don't mention it," he protested, " we can't leave your poor parents a minute longer than is necessary without you, so I think we must pack you off home as soon as ever we can.

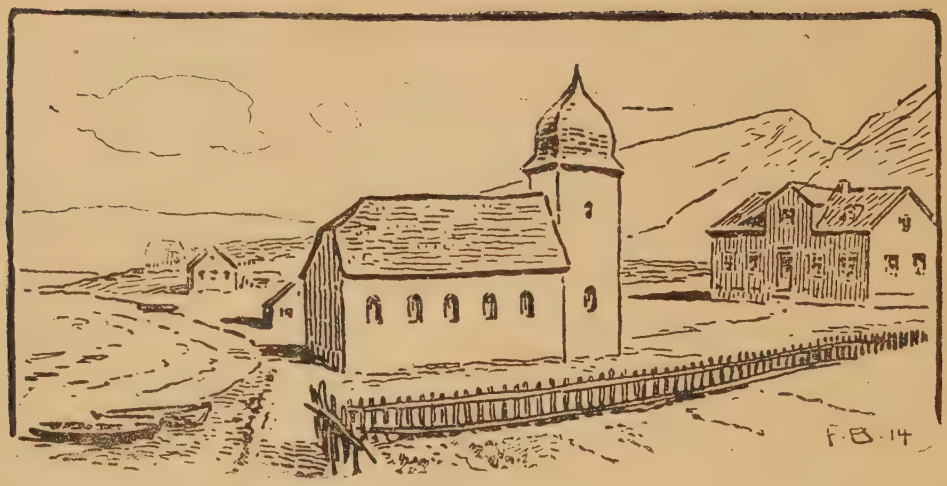
But," he went on, " as long as the ' Fylla ' is in harbour, you'll be most heartily welcome whenever you can get leave to row out and pay me a visit."

This new kindness quite overcame us and we overwhelmed our captain with renewed expressions of thanks. He came up on deck with us to see us off. A snow-white launch, to which our little boat was secured, awaited us in the water. Three sailors were told off to convey us home. We took an affectionate leave of all our friends, giving up at the same time our miniature dirks. Our midshipmen friends came with us almost to the head of the stairs, which were ready lowered to take us down the ship's side. It was Manni who got a bright idea at the sight of them. Straightway he ran over to the captain's side.

" Sir," he pleaded politely, " would it be too much to ask you to give our companions leave to accompany us ashore ?"

The captain began to laugh and readily gave the required permission. " But," he said, " you must make yourself responsible for their return on board this evening. Mind now, no escapades of the sort you two fancy !"

" I'll answer for them, sir," replied Manni proudly. Then he dashed off to tell our friends that he had got leave for them to go ashore with us. Their joy at this news was unbounded; for, as they told us, " shore leave " was very seldom granted.



HOME AGAIN

When everything was ready we took our places in the pinnace, and, turning in our seats, shouted a last good-bye to our rescuers.

"*Paa Gensyn;* we'll see you soon again," came the friendly response.

"What direction are we to row in?" said one of the sailors to me, as soon as we were clear of the ship's side. Manni didn't give me time to answer.

"Oh, do let me take the helm," he cried. "I'll steer beautifully."

"Certainly," answered the good-natured sailor with a laugh, yielding the tiller to my little brother. So Manni, very proud indeed to be in charge of such a fine big boat, took the helm. The young imp, however, had no intention of putting us straight, head-on, for our home. He was going to cut a dash for a little, by cruising past some of the foreign ships that were still lying in the harbour. At Akureyri our disappearance had made quite a stir. Everyone had heard about it, not only on shore, but also on all the boats in the harbour. So we were immediately recognised as we passed these

ships, and all kinds of questions were showered upon us. We didn't go into any details in answering, but just said we were out fishing, had got lost, and had come back on board the " Fylla."

Some of the questioners laughed at that, and shook their fingers mockingly at us. A few even went so far as to prophecy a warm reception for us on our return, with a wealth of realistic and sinister dumb show. Naturally these predictions didn't please us one bit. So Manni called on his oarsmen to pick up the stroke, and swinging the boat round sped in straight line for home. Our house was next door to the church, and only a very little way from the sea front. When we got to the shore we jumped out. We pressed the sailors to run up both boats on the strand and leave them safely beached there for the present. We did so because we wanted them to come with us and our little Danish friends to see our father and mother. They accepted our invitation, beached the boats out of reach of the tide, and followed us.

Father and mother, and our sister, Bogga, no sooner caught sight of us than they flew to us with open arms. In that first warm welcome at least there was no thought of reproach or punishment for their two small sinners. We were for that moment nothing but sons lost and thought dead but returned, and returned alive and well. To make ready the fatted calf was the next idea ; and our companions were, of course, invited to share the coffee and cakes of our welcome-home festival.

While we, too happy to be coherent, were seating ourselves at the familiar round table, our little Danish friends and the sailors told what they knew of our adventures. When they had finished their story they laid special stress on the suffering we had gone

through, and pleaded they should be regarded as sufficient expiation for any fault our thoughtlessness and inexperience had led us to commit. They prayed hard that as we had been so good all the time we were on board the "Fylla" any balance of punishment that might be due to us should be remitted. Our parents, of course, couldn't refuse the petition of our good-natured benefactors, so we owed to them our complete pardon from any kind of penalty whatever.

Manni and Nonni

I took this opportunity of telling my mother how kind the Danish boys had been to us. By way of marking her gratitude to them she went off to look for a big box of preserved fruits which she gave them and which they accepted gracefully. They stopped about an hour, and then, bidding good-bye to our parents, they prepared to return to the "Fylla." Manni and I accompanied them to the beach. There were tears in our eyes as we bade a last farewell to our friends and deliverers, thanking them once more for all their kindness. Then their boat's keel grated on the shore, they pushed

off. After watching for a few moments the widening space of water that separated us, we turned our backs on the sea, and went into the house.

Even in the excitement of that first afternoon of home-coming, I could not banish a very insistent anxiety from my brain. The vow that we had made that night on the deep kept recurring to my mind. I had serious doubts as to our power to fulfill the promise we had made so solemnly to Almighty God. Finally I made up my mind to talk to Manni about it that very day. I went off to look for him and to get him to come out for a walk with me. He agreed to the proposal willingly, and we set out together to climb a little mist-wreathed hill that overhung the town. When we had reached the top, we seated ourselves on an outcrop of bare rock, which jutted up from the carpet of rose and green that crowned the summit. For a little while neither of us spoke. In silence we looked out over the roadstead, its shining surface dotted with sea-going ships. The " Fylla " was conspicuous among these, for she was now the largest ship in the port. At last I interrupted the silence.

" Manni," I said turning to my little brother, " do you remember the vow we made, you and I ? It's a big thing that vow, because you know, of course, that when you make a promise to God you must keep it at all costs ? "

" Of course," he replied, " especially after the miracle He worked to save us."

" That's true, but we've promised Him to go out and be missioners to the pagans. How on earth are we going to keep that promise ? "

Manni looked at me for a moment with innocent, untroubled

eyes. Then he said slowly, " I don't know how we're going to keep it, but I know God's going to help us to. He can manage everything and I think we ought to leave it all to Him."

That was always Manni's way out of a difficulty; good little soul, he trusted the God he loved to help him in everything.

After a little I answered.

" I believe you're absolutely right, Manni. All the same I think we ought to ask God to help us now and then in the meantime; and keep on remembering hard what we've promised Him."

Manni agreed to this and we set off down the hill, homeward, quite cheered up.

* * * * * * * * * * *

AFTERWARDS

Years went by and at last as a result of a chain of fortunate circumstances, or rather, let me say, by a disposition of Divine Providence, I went to finish my studies in France. Three years later my brother followed me there.

Manni, who remained just the same pious, innocent boy as he grew up, died while he was studying to be a priest in Louvain, twelve years after he had left Iceland. Thus God took the effort for the performance in His fulfilment of our vow. And I, I could only feel deep trust and hope, even at this cutting short of his young life, remembering the night on the deep waters of the Eyjafyordur, when he had slept in the embrace of Jesus.

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